Dear Jim, 8/20/77

While you are both on our minds often I do not write not to intrude. However, I do look for what might for a moement interest that indomitable spirit of yours. Lately there have not even been worhtwhile cartoons.

But in today's mail there was what reminds me of something that may amuse Je for a minute.

What is in the mail is a box of more than a thousand pages of newspaper clippings from the Memphis FBI field office files, the first batch of compliance from that office. This has been resisted bitterly but they finally came to us and asked for stipulations. We did negotiate them. I'll come back to this in the event if it of interest.

The FBI has finally begin to deliver its files on me. I'm keeping book on what the files disclose that they have not provided. Their usual game is to restrict themselves to what is called the FBIHQ files, pretending, along with the common mythology, that this is all there is. Actually most never gets to Washington, as I've established in court.

Among these records was the letter Hoover wrote Marvin Watson for LBJ on seven of us who had written books. (Think I'll write Schweiker, who refused even to give me a copy with all names but mine masked. Great man of decency, he.) The copy the FBI has just given me masks all names but mine. There is perhaps half of the attached memo on me that is not blacked out.

As you might imagine, none of it is faithful. At their best they distort, twist, angle and inject poisons of Hooverian creation. The idea is their norm, to paint me red.

The item Lil and I enjoyed most is the one that has me celebrating the Russian revolution every year with a picnic for between 25 and 35 people.

Can you imagine the joy that welled in LBJ's patriotic heart when he saw that?

Or the doubts that were ~~quieted~~ quieted in the minds of the all the Attorneys General, all of whom ~~xxx~~ were favored on the earliest possible occasion? Or in the minds of all the many department lawyers whose desks also were papered whenever my name was mentioned?

They really missed their opportunities. I was so anxious to celebrate the Russian revoluation I could not await November 7. I held mine in September. How old LBJ would have loved that!

Here's the reality they converted into this fable:

We had a friend who was an orthodox (pretty much) rabbi. He also was a real character in Exodus, if you read the book after combat one of those who went to Yemen to retrieve those still living in medieval days. He was in charge of the Jewish Welfare Board's activities on behalf of service personnel in the Washington area, post, Pentagon, etc. Religious activities and recreational. So after the end of the high holy day in September he though it would be relaxing and refreshing for his people and their families who wanted a day in the country to be able to go to a real farm, where the kids could see and play with real animals and fowl, gather eggs still hot from under hens, see the baby chicks as they hatched and as they cavorted around the brooders and all the other t ings we had. No more than this and not a red in the rainbow of their views. (I suppose there are those in the FBI who might have regarded Jack's Iranian wife Vicki as red. Her father, a singer, had to flee Iranian persecution when she was a girl. They went to France. Came Hitler and he put Vicki in a school run by nuns. She spent the occupation as a courier for the underground.)

Of such is the kingdom of the FBI. In private, that is, deepest secrecy.

With me they did not stoop tp conquor. They actually were cooking up a scheme that will sound familiar to you. I sent you my letter to Lyndal Shaneyfelt after we deposed him earlier

this year. He had sought to contaminate the deposition by alleging I'd libelled him, that he had taken it up with FBI Legal Counsel, and they had decided against his suing me.

Well, it was not quite that way from the records I've received. The FBI was looking to "stop" me. Believing their own propaganda they decided that I had defame Shaneyfelt and that they should consider suing me in his name. But then some got cautious. They then started wondering if I'd be immune under New York Times v Sullivan, because Shaneyfelt was a public official. While in the end they decided he was not and I would not have this automatic immunity, their records show they left the decision up to him and he decided against it.

I hope I have another 20 years to regret their decision. That would have done it!

Times have changed some. Although they probably still regard me as some special kind of dangerous subversive, they also have concerns for what is happening to them in court in my King FOIA case. I got to where the judge had agreed to compel them to provide me with an inventory of every single record they have - and the AG's estimate is 203,500 records. So they proposed stipulations, to which I agreed tentatively pending approval of the exact language. They are to complete compliance from the Memphis Field Office by 10/1, meaning copies in my hands, and six other specified filed offices by 11/1.

Now we can concentrate on the finking Department, which is in wide non-compliance.

On my administrative request for remission of all fees because this is an historical case in which I have already arranged a university deposit they have given me a 40% discount that I've accepted reserving the right to litigate this and I've appealed it. In today's mail there is an FBI refund for $792 plus that will soon go back to the government in other FOIA charges.

Now I know they love me!

Ours, which is not at all like theirs, to both of you.